

anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,234,817 to Hwang et al. ("Hwang"). It is respectfully submitted that Hwang fails to anticipate claims 1, 2, 4 and 5 for at least the following reasons.

To anticipate a claim under § 102, a single prior art reference must identically disclose each and every claim element. See Lindeman Machinenfabrik v. American Hoist and Derrick, 730 F.2d 1452, 1458 (Fed. Cir. 1984). If any claimed element is absent from a prior art reference, it cannot anticipate the claim. See Rowe v. Dror, 112 F.3d 473, 478 (Fed. Cir. 1997). Anticipation requires the presence in a single prior art reference disclosure of each and every element of the claim invention, arranged as in the claim. Lindeman, 703 F.2d 1458 (Emphasis added).

According to The Office Action, Hwang discloses:

an electrical connector comprising: a plug connector (20) having a guide element (24); a single composite mating connector (10) having recess (14), the recess being dimensioned so that during an insertion process the guide element is guided into the recess and in an inserted state the recess is set apart from the guide element (since the plug connector is movable with regard to the mating connector when both mated, col. 2, lines 46-48).

However, Hwang does not, in fact, disclose a recess-being dimensioned so that during an insertion process the guide element is guided into the recess and in an inserted state the recess is set apart from the guide element. Instead, Hwang discloses a plug connector (20) having a pair of guiding rods (24), which include a tapered tip (24a), that are received in the receiving passage (14) of the receptacle connector when the plug connector and receptacle connector are engaged. (See FIGs. 1, 2, 4; col. 2, ll. 32-45). When the two connectors are fully engaged and mated, the tapered tips of the guiding rods extend beyond the receiving passage; however, in this inserted state, both guiding rods are fully within, and not set apart from, the receiving passage. (See FIG. 4).

For its support, the Office Action cites a sentence in Hwang that states "[f]loatable means 30 is arranged the plug connector 20 such that when the plug connector 20 is moveable to the corresponding receptacle connector 10 when both are mated." (Hwang, col. 2, ll. 46-48). This sentence is simply incoherent and ambiguous. Another section in Hwang appears to disclose the following more understandable description of the floating

The statement used by Examiner is suggested limitation. The recess is set apart from guide element.

means:

Floatable means arranged at least on the first connector such that when the first (floatable) connector is mated to the corresponding second connector of the second substrate, the first (floatable) connector is moveable respect to the corresponding second connector to compensate any misalignment therebetween thereby ensuring an electrical connection between the first and second connectors. (Hwang, col. 1, ll. 46-53).

Thus, The floating means, as disclosed in Hwang, allows the entire plug connector (20) to move or "float" with respect to the substrate (41) of which the connector is attached so that both connectors can remain attached to one another when the associated substrates are not fully aligned. (See Hwang, FIG. 5; col. 49-60). For at least the reason that Hwang does not disclose a recess being dimensioned so that during an insertion process the guide element is guided into the recess and in an inserted state the recess is set apart from the guide element, it is respectfully submitted that Hwang does not anticipate claim 1 under 35 U.S.C. 102(e). Claims 2, 4, and 5 depend from claim 1, so the above argument regarding claim 1 applies equally to claims 2, 4, and 5. Therefore Hwang fails to anticipate these claims. Withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

Claims 3 and 6 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Hwang in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,358,067 to Takase et al. ("Takase")¹. It is respectfully submitted that the combination of Hwang and Takase fails to render claims 3 and 6 obvious for at least the following reasons.

To establish prima facie obviousness of a claimed invention, all the claim limitations must be taught or suggested by the prior art. In re Royka, 490 F.2d 981, 180 U.S.P.Q. 580 (C.C.P.A. 1974). "All words in a claim must be considered in judging the patentability of that claim against the prior art." In re Wilson, 424 F.2d 1382, 1385, 165 U.S.P.Q. 494, 496 (C.C.P.A. 1970).

The Office Action states that Hwang discloses all of the limitations of claims 3

¹ U.S. Patent No. 6,358,067 is not a valid 102(e) reference against the present application. Nevertheless, since the corresponding PCT application WO99/36995 was published on July 22, 1999, Applicants will address the technical merits of Takase.

Takase can be used for 102 e
rejection since
three conditions meet

and 6 except the guide element (24) having a cam like form and rounded edges. As discussed above, Hwang fails to disclose at least the following claim element: a recess being dimensioned so that during an insertion process the guide element is guided into the recess and in an inserted state the recess is set apart from the guide element. Similarly, Takase fails to teach or suggest this claimed limitation. For at least these reasons, the combination of Hwang and Takase does not render either claim 3 or claim 6 obvious under 35 U.S. C. 103(a). Withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

CONCLUSION

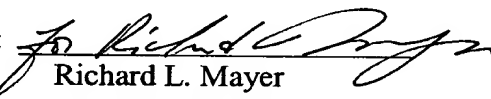
In light of the foregoing, Applicants respectfully submit that all of the pending claims are in condition for allowance. Prompt reconsideration and allowance of the present application are therefore earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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